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Books Arts & Manners

*The Night Watch: 25 Years of
Peculiar Service*
By David Atlee Phillips
Atheneum, 320 pp., \$9.95

THE AZALEA TRAIL GUIDE TO CIA

E. HOWARD HUNT

At the outset it seems proper to acknowledge what author David Phillips states in his book, *The Night Watch*: that we were colleagues in the Central Intelligence Agency, and worked together during the Guatemalan and Cuban political-action projects. Moreover, in my book on the Bay of Pigs, *Give Us This Day*, Phillips appears as "Knight," a capable, inspired officer whom I praise for his resourcefulness and dedication. Accordingly, I not only know Dave Phillips, but knew him professionally for over a decade, and have first-hand familiarity with some of the epochal events his book describes.

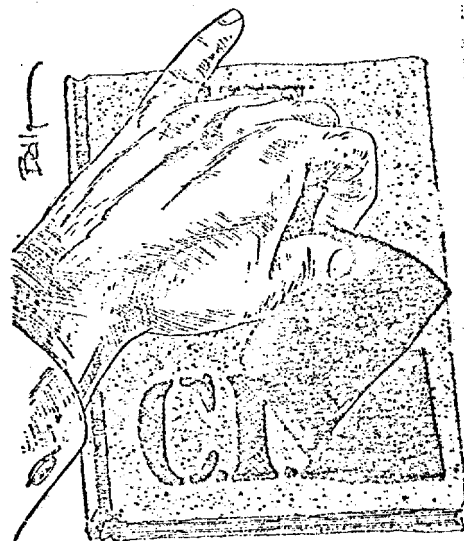
For those reasons I find it hard to understand Phillips' fabricating several episodes in which I allegedly played a role. But aside from personal irritation over manufactured dialogue, I was disappointed in his book. What I had hoped for was a serious and anecdotal analysis of the profession of intelligence. Instead, the book comes off as a chatty tour-guide to personalities and events Phillips was involved with during his quarter-century with CIA.

Phillips' pre-CIA experience as an actor gave him a particular advantage over those of us who had never trod the boards, for Dave was the best stand-up briefer, the most persuasive and articulate of all the scores of briefing officers I necessarily heard during my own decades with CIA. His deep-rooted flair for the dramatic is evident on nearly every page of *The Night Watch*, and this makes for easy reading. There is a nearly breathless quality in Phillips' style that quickly asserts itself and commands the reader's interest. Even I, who played a role in some of the incidents described, found myself carried along, half-wondering what would be the denouement of events that for years have been history.

Had Phillips produced the kind of book for which I had hoped, and of which I believe him fully capable, I think that he would have had difficulty finding a publisher. In fact, his light-hearted approach to a serious and occasionally deadly business, his moral judgments and slightly left-of-center philosophy, were apparently appropriate for a publishing climate in which CIA is generally viewed as an amoral villain, a threat to our democracy. In short, I infer that Phillips trimmed his sails to the prevailing wind. But this is not necessarily bad. One wants broad readership for a book that advocates a Central Intelligence Agency and is less critical of Agency missions than, say, a Tad Szulc or a Sy Hersh.

The author's descriptions of day-to-day Agency life in Washington and abroad are accurate, as are his accounts of CIA's Guatemalan and Cuban operations. Particularly worthwhile is Phillips' analysis of LBJ's intervention in the Dominican Republic, possibly the last time this country was able to make its policies prevail in international affairs.

The book usefully delineates the fundamental difference between intelligence collection and covert action. These national security functions used to be segregated under different Directorates in CIA, just as today there are separate Directorates for analysis and operations. Until 1954 each CIA Station was bicameral: half of the Station collected



intelligence via Party penetrations, informants, and technical means, while the other half utilized and exploited the covertly acquired information. In Congress, at least, there is a detectable disposition to separate once more the collection and exploitation functions, and I believe this would be useful, though not if it means erecting yet another intelligence agency. The Director of CIA is, after all, the coordinator of the intelligence community, and can be depended upon to organize his own Agency functionally according to the demands placed upon it by the National Security Council.